



**TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
KIVA – CITY HALL
3939 N. DRINKWATER BOULEVARD
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA
OCTOBER 20, 2005**

SUMMARIZED REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Vice-Chair Brian Davis
Commissioner Michael Bruz
Commissioner David Hill
Commissioner William Howard
Commissioner Matthew Taunton

ABSENT: Chairman Mark Gilliland
Commissioner Kelly McCall

STAFF PRESENT: Rose Arballo, Transportation Commission Coordinator
Debra Astin, Transit Manager
Dave Meinhart, Transportation Planning and Transit Director
Paul Porell, Traffic Engineering Director

OTHERS PRESENT: John Berry, Berry & Damore, LLC.

- 1 **CALL TO ORDER**
The Regular meeting of the Scottsdale Transportation Commission was called to order by Vice-Chair Davis at 6:04 p.m.
- 2 **ROLL CALL**
A formal roll call confirmed the members present as stated above.
- 3 **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**
COMMISSIONER BRUZ MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 23, 2005 REGULAR MEETING AND STUDY SESSION. COMMISSIONER TAUNTON SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY A VOTE OF 5-0.

4 **REQUEST TO MODIFY STREETS MASTER PLAN**

Mr. Meinhart addressed the meeting on the proposal by Land Development Services, L.L.C. Staff have been working with the development group and neighbors. The Land Development Services project is proposing to make Alameda Road a private road east of 122nd Street. There would be emergency access provided to the adjacent neighborhoods. Public east-west access between 118th and 128th Streets would be provided off the Ranch Gate Road alignment, a quarter mile north of Happy Valley Road at 118th Street. That road would transition southeasterly to Happy Valley and continue east to 128th Street.

Mr. Berry appeared on behalf of the Applicants. His detailed presentation included maps and aerial photos of the master planned community. He explained that the City's commitment to desert preservation has resulted in changes that need to be recognized in the master plan. The voter-approved expansion of the desert preserve had a major impact on transportation planning. Before the expansion, significant development was anticipated in the neighborhood. Alameda and 128th Street were designed to be major access points. Traffic analysis showed a 33 percent reduction in trip generation with the Preserve expansion. The Ranch Gate Road alignment was a more logical location for east-west access between 118th and 128th Streets.

Mr. Berry spoke regarding the outreach efforts with the neighborhood. The neighbors are passionate about this proposal, which is supported by good transportation planning. The proposal recognizes the reduction in transportation needs and capacity. The change is positive both for the Preserve and the neighborhood.

Vice-Chairman Davis noted cards from members of the public who did not wish to speak, as follows: Ms. Sperko, in favor of the proposal; Mr. Sperko, in favor of the proposal; Dr. and Mrs. Endino, representing Neighbors of Alameda, in favor of the proposal. Pat McDonald represented Neighbors Opposing Alameda Extension, in favor of the proposal.

Vice-Chairman Davis opened the floor for public commentary. Mr. Honey expressed support for the proposal. He congratulated the City and the developer for their responsiveness to the neighborhood concerns. He expressed a concern about routing of future construction traffic in the area.

Mr. Coast addressed the meeting on behalf of Neighbors Opposing Alameda Extension, whom had met with Mr. Meinhart and other City staff, collected 126 signatures on a petition. The group is in favor of the proposal.

Mr. Miller expressed support for the proposal, noting that Alameda Road is a minor collector with no shoulders. He presented photos of the road and construction traffic.

Mr. Kleiner noted that he was the only person who did not live close to Alameda Road, would be affected by the rerouting and was willing to speak. He remarked that neighbors not in the immediate vicinity of Alameda Road were apparently left

out of the outreach and discussion. He felt blindsided as he found out about it by reading the Transportation Department's October 12 letter. He requested that the Commission defer discussion until the neighbors who do not reside along the Alameda corridor have an opportunity to respond.

Mr. and Mrs. Boles reported that they did not receive a notice and found out about the meeting two days previously. They do not know how the proposal would affect their property. They, and three adjacent property owners, would like more time to consider how they are affected. Several other easements on the property have already been abandoned. Land Development Services, L.L.C. made no attempt to contact them.

Mr. Koe noted that because of gated communities, neighbors living outside the communities have to make significant detours to leave the area.

Vice-Chairman Davis noted that Mr. Goode did not wish to speak but is in favor of the agenda item.

Mr. Berry reported that the developer had done more extensive outreach than legally required. The City also extended their outreach further west into Troon. With regard to the owners of the four lots who were concerned about losing their access, he said that the developer had tried to be sensitive and take their needs into consideration. Legal access into the Applicant's community for these properties has been maintained. He apologized that they were not aware of that fact. Mr. Berry stressed the thought and effort that have gone into the proposal and asked the Commission to support the approach.

Commissioner Hill asked staff about comments by members of the public who were hesitant about the proposal. Mr. Meinhart explained that City staff have not been directly involved in the outreach, although notification of tonight's meeting was sent out the previous week. Staff is seeking a balanced solution to area traffic issues and believes the applicant's solution will work. State land has to be brought into this process. If the proposal does not come to fruition in the near term, staff suggests that Alameda continue as a public access road east of 122nd Street.

In response to a question by Commissioner Hill concerning Preservation Department approval, Mr. Meinhart reported that Preservation Department staff have been involved in the staff review, along with the Planning and Fire Departments. Alameda Road was never intended to be the primary access to the trailhead.

Responding to questions by Commissioner Taunton, Mr. Meinhart informed the Commission that Preserve staff project a maximum of 250 parking spaces at the trailhead with 100 spaces planned initially. Mr. Berry noted that the proposal includes a very comprehensive public trail system through the subdivision for cyclists and equestrians.

Discussion ensued, wherein Mr. Meinhart informed the Commission that the properties to the east are zoned as low density. Commissioner Howard noted that the center of the transportation load will shift to the east and wondered how

those people would feel about the proposal. Mr. Meinhart replied that staff had discussions with one of the larger landowners in that area who supports the proposal and reiterated that Fire Department staff have been actively involved in the staff review.

During continued discussions regarding access, Mr. Berry noted that construction traffic has been a major issue for the neighborhood. He added that the Applicant will be paying for the construction of Ranch Gate/Happy Valley Road. As soon as the new road is built, construction access will be along this corridor rather than Alameda Road.

Commissioner Howard expressed concern regarding the neighbors to the east and queried the process of notification. Mr. Meinhart reported that staff have met with one property owner who owns approximately 300 acres to the east. The most recent mailing was sent to all mailing addresses in the area. Mr. Berry reported that they had sent out at least four mailers and opined that many of the landowners in the neighborhood are out of state speculators. Only two comments opposed to the proposal have been received from that neighborhood.

In response to a request for confirmation by Commissioner Hill regarding access to the trailhead, Mr. Meinhart stated that he has not seen a detailed public trail plan. The City's standard approach is to require public easements over those trails. Mr. Berry added that the City has changed the language in the agreements to ensure that HOAs do not gain control and prevent public access. The developer is legally required to maintain the paths for the benefit of the public.

Vice-Chairman Davis read a comment card from Mrs. Boles regarding the four lots in the northwest corner of Crown Properties. Her comment states that "All four lots were purchased prior to Scottsdale annexation. They are all grandfathered lots and Crown is mistaken on their legality." Mr. Berry explained that the plan would not change the legal access point for the four lots.

In response to various questions by Vice-Chairman Davis:

Mr. Berry confirmed that Alameda will be gated, adding that presently the only access is via Happy Valley Road. In an emergency there is currently no alternate route. Emergency vehicles have instant access to gated communities.

Mr. Meinhart explained that the existing roadway for Alameda is classified as a minor collector. Unlike many minor collectors, there is no continuous center turn lane. This was omitted to minimize paving in the area, which is covered by the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance (ESLO). None of the homes have direct driveway access onto Alameda.

Mr. Meinhart noted that if both of the roadways are projected to be local collectors they would be more like residential streets and bike lanes would not necessarily be added. Staff would consider adding bike lanes to 118th and 128th Streets. Mr. Berry added that the Applicant will do whatever the City asks in regard to trails.

Vice-Chairman Davis asked whether Ranch Gate would be better designed as a minor collector. Mr. Meinhart stated that staff could review the option of adding bike lanes on Ranch Gate, but noted that would be inconsistent with past practice to keep residentially-oriented streets narrower.

Vice Chairman Davis asked what the implications to the City would be in the event the proposal were approved. Mr. Meinhart explained that the Applicant's request would delete approximately six blocks of Alameda Road from the existing streets master plan. Building Ranch Gate Road as a local collector does not entail an official change to the streets master plan. The developer would be obligated to build the road, however.

Vice-Chairman Davis expressed reluctance in deleting Alameda Road from the streets master plan until Ranch Gate has actually been built. He opined that the plan looked acceptable but expressed concern over the implications of deleting a section of roadway. Mr. Meinhart suggested that the removal of the section of Alameda Road could be made contingent upon the Applicant building the Ranch Gate Road alignment.

Upon query by Commissioner Taunton, Mr. Meinhart stated that staff recommended that an attempt be made to resolve this issue through the Transportation Commission before going to Planning, as the decision made by the Transportation Commission will affect land use.

Commissioner Hill suggested that the Commission consider the current session as an information session. He was not prepared to recommend that the proposal go forward as proposed now, especially given the dissent expressed by stakeholders on three sides of the Applicant's property. He appreciated the efforts the Applicant has made to come up with a good plan and consult with neighbors.

Commissioner Howard echoed Commissioner Hill's comments. He expressed concerns that some neighbors had not been afforded the opportunity to comment on their interests. The volume of traffic on Alameda Road is a valid consideration.

COMMISSIONER HOWARD MADE A MOTION TO TABLE THE PROPOSAL UNTIL ADDITIONAL INFORMATION HAS BEEN CIRCULATED TO THE PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL AND THEY HAVE A CHANCE TO COMMENT UPON IT.

Vice-Chairman Davis noted that the item was on the agenda for information and possible action, eliminating the need for a motion to table the proposal.

Mr. Meinhart noted that the proposal could be placed on the agenda as an action item at the next meeting, if the Commission so desired.

Mr. Berry requested feedback from the Commission. Commissioner Hill remarked that the Commission has to look at the big picture and be certain that all of the stakeholders have a chance to express their views.

Commissioner Bruz reminded the Commission that a motion was on the table and opined that the Applicant has gone beyond what the City would require as a minimum for notification. He further noted the accommodations for access of emergency vehicles, the improved access to the area with the addition of the 118th Street alignment and that absentee property owners may not have any comments they wish to make. He is in favor of the proposal.

COMMISSIONER HILL SECONDED THE MOTION.

Vice-Chairman Davis stated that because unusual stipulations were discussed, the language should be ironed out prior to taking action at a future meeting. He requested that the Applicant work with staff on this issue.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH A VOTE OF 4-1, WITH COMMISSIONER BRUZ DISSENTING.

Vice-Chairman Davis suggested that this appear as an action item on the Commission's next meeting agenda.

5. **CACTUS ROAD PROJECT**

Mr. Meinhart presented the staff report. He reviewed the history of the plans for this neighborhood, including the use of roundabouts on 96th Street, Cactus Road, and 104th Street. The designers recommended steel equestrian silhouettes as decoration for three roundabouts on Cactus Road.

Vice-Chairman Davis read a comment card from Ms. Wood which expressed concern with the location of the horses and the three-quarter inch steel to be used. She felt that the tails could be dangerous. A photo and a sample of steel was distributed to the Commissioners.

In response to questions by Commissioner Hill, Mr. Meinhart stated that all 12 horse sculptures are supposed to be the same size. Mr. Meinhart explained that the landscape architect team designed the horses. As such, they are not part of the public art program. Mr. Porell noted that the Development Review Board has reviewed the designs. Construction will occur in early 2006.

In response to a question by Commission Bruz, Mr. Meinhart confirmed that Ms. Wood's August letter focused on safety concerns as opposed to art concerns. Mr. Porell confirmed that staff had studied modern roundabout design and determined that the silhouettes would be appropriate. The placement of the sculptures has been designed to ensure that traffic has clear sightlines. Modern roundabouts need a vertical element in the design so that approaching drivers have a clear indication that there is an island in the roadway.

In answer to a question from Vice-Chairman Davis, Mr. Porell indicated that the roundabout at 96th and Sweetwater, which is nearly completed, is representative of most of the planned Cactus Road roundabouts.

Mr. Meinhart noted that the roundabouts under construction on 96th Street have similar types of vertical definition. Further discussion ensued, identifying staff's

opinion that the designs are safe and appropriate. Peer reviews have been conducted by a national consulting firm, RTE.

Commissioner Taunton opined that this issue extends beyond the expertise of the Commission and the Commission is not qualified to take any action in this matter.

Commissioner Hill recalled that the Commission had seen and previously approved the roundabout design. He opined that the silhouettes might, in fact, make the roundabout safer by encouraging drivers to turn. He noted that the Development Review Board had approved the design.

Commissioner Bruz asked whether RTE knew that the silhouettes were part of the roundabout design when they did the review. Mr. Porell reported that the first review was of the geometrics and he is not certain that the landscape design plans were provided. Commissioner Bruz agreed that the project should move on, with no need to be revisited.

Commissioner Howard asked whether RTE had concurred with the design. Mr. Porell stated that during the initial review of the 96th Street roundabouts, RTE had given feedback on how to improve the approach geometry. Staff applied what they had learned to the design of the more recent roundabouts.

In response to questions by Vice-Chairman Davis regarding the size and cost of the silhouettes, Mr. Porell reported that no element of the design will project past the vertical face of the wall. Mr. Meinhart stated that the cost figures will be available shortly; but estimated that the sculptures would cost about the same as mature trees and maintenance costs would be much lower.

Vice-Chairman Davis expressed confidence that the safety concerns had been addressed by staff and there would be no need to revisit the item.

6 **DOWNTOWN TROLLEY PLANNING EFFORTS**

Ms. Astin thanked the members of the subcommittee who served on the Trolley Committee. Staff had tried to be comprehensive and contacted many stakeholder groups. Anyone who expressed interest was invited to join.

Ms. Astin outlined the current route and hours of operation and discussed current costs, possible improvements and the cost of those improvements. Many options had been considered. She discussed in detail the Marshall/Main routes intended to serve the downtown area and encourage pedestrian activity in the downtown core.

Ms. Astin presented a slide denoting cost estimates for the proposed Marshall/Main route improvements under various scenarios. The committee had ranked the importance of different priorities as follows:

- (1) Maintain core services
- (2) Maintain Art Walk
- (3) Add seventh day service
- (4) Friday and Saturday evening service, especially during the season
- (5) Add Sunday evening service

With the inclusion of a 10-minute headway in the service, the additional cost is estimated at approximately \$2.7 million. With a 15-minute headway, the estimated additional cost is \$2 million. The cost of the current route is \$900,000, annually.

The downtown entertainment industry requested that the Committee consider implementing a nighttime trolley. A meeting was held to explore this option and various industry stakeholders were in attendance, who expressed the need of something unique to help compete with other entertainment venues. A four-month demonstration project was proposed for Friday and Saturday evenings from 10:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Ideally the demonstration should occur from January through April. The operating cost for the demonstration project would be roughly \$55,000, with careful designation of the service.

She noted that the Trolley Committee had not been asked to consider whether the trolley service is in balance with the other components of the transit system. At next month's meeting, staff will present an overall operating budget for transit. The Commission will be asked for their input on prioritizing improvement measures. If a new route such as Marshall/Main were to be implemented, a public hearing would be required. She added that more trolleys would be needed to add a route, which would likely not be delivered before summer 2006. A marketing consultant will be dealing with the trolley.

In response to inquiry by Commissioner Howard, Ms. Astin described the current route schedule and reported that last year the trolley served 73,000 riders in seven months. The cost per passenger last year was approximately \$5.50 per trip. Service is free of charge to passengers.

Commissioner Taunton complimented Ms. Astin on the workshops, reporting that he attended four out of the five that were held. Participants were an extremely diverse group and she did a great job of making sure everyone was welcome to express their opinions.

Commissioner Taunton opined that the two proposed routes are both very appealing. He suggested eliminating the top portion of the orange route, essentially north of Camelback, which he perceives as an underperforming part of the route. He felt that the seventh day and nighttime service would be of greater benefit overall.

Commissioner Hill stated that he was impressed with the stakeholders that showed up when he attended the first workshop. He asked how the ridership figures compared July 1st. Ms. Astin answered that in July, ridership was equal

to early November 2004. Current ridership is at the level of late December 2004, which is way ahead of what she anticipated, especially given the construction-related traffic disruptions downtown.

Commissioner Hill suggested that staff bring a concrete well-defined action item to the next meeting. He also suggested that representatives of the working group attend the meeting. Ms. Astin stated that staff would likely ask the Commission to prioritize the improvements and make a recommendation to City

Council. Mr. Meinhart pointed out that there would be non-trolley transit improvements to prioritize as well and that they have finite funding.

Vice-Chairman Davis asked if staff had considered the new routes in terms of an anticipated cost per passenger and how many new trolleys would be needed. Ms. Astin replied that the Working Group had used their own intuition of where they felt routes should go. Ten trolleys are needed to implement the entire plan.

7 **STATUS OF CURRENT MAJOR TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**

Mr. Meinhart spoke on the status of current major transportation projects. He outlined the projects completed or close to completion during 2005, including included the section of Hayden Road from the Pima Freeway to Thompson Peak Parkway; the Scottsdale Road corridor from Indian Bend to Gold Dust; bus pullouts and shelters; and intelligent transportation systems.

Major projects currently under construction include 96th Street; Scottsdale Road from Union Hills to the 101; widening of Union Hills/Mayo Boulevard; the intersection of Hayden and McDonald Roads; and Camelback Road at Scottsdale Road and Marshall Way.

In response to questions by Commissioner Bruz, Mr. Meinhart explained that the parkway landscaping on Hayden Road between Thompson Peak Parkway and the 101 will occur as the land is developed. Developers are expected to build the adjacent sidewalks and install landscaping.

8 **ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR**

None.

9 **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Howard stated that the Transportation Commission has a duty to be aware of the development of the master transportation plan as it proceeds, as opposed to receiving quarterly progress updates. He suggested that the Commission consider appointing a subcommittee to be engaged in the development of the master transportation plan.

Discussion ensued, whereupon Mr. Meinhart acknowledged that there will be key steps involved in the preparation of the master plan. A consultant will soon be appointed and the process is expected to take 15 to 18 months. Mr. Meinhart briefly outlined the process, noting that the goal is to develop a 20-year plan.

Commissioner Taunton queried the City's policy regarding privatizing public rights-of-way for the use of a master planned community and requested that when the Alameda Road item is next before the Commission, that staff present a better understanding of how those decisions are made. Mr. Meinhart stated that City Council would be involved in changes to the street master plan and clarified that currently there is no existing road right-of-way on Alameda.

Commissioner Hill concurred with Commissioner Howard's recommendation that the Commission be more involved with the process of developing the master transportation plan. He volunteered to serve on a subcommittee, depending on time constraints.

Commissioner Howard suggested that the formation of the trolley subcommittee might serve as a model in this case. Commissioner Taunton recommended that the Commission become an integral part of the public involvement process. Mr. Meinhart confirmed staff's intentions of involving the Commission and noted that staff will be prepared to discuss the public involvement plan by the December Commission meeting, at which time the Commission can consider the options for their involvement.

Commissioner Howard remarked that this is a very important process that will set the stage for years to come in Scottsdale. He further opined that this issue is the most important thing facing the Commission today and as such, demands extraordinary scrutiny.

10 **GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

Mr. Meinhart expressed Ms. O'Connor's regrets at her absence.

11 **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
AV-Tronics, Inc.

***NOTE: Video and/or audio recordings of Scottsdale Transportation Commission meetings are available from the Scottsdale Transportation Department for up to six months following the meeting date.**